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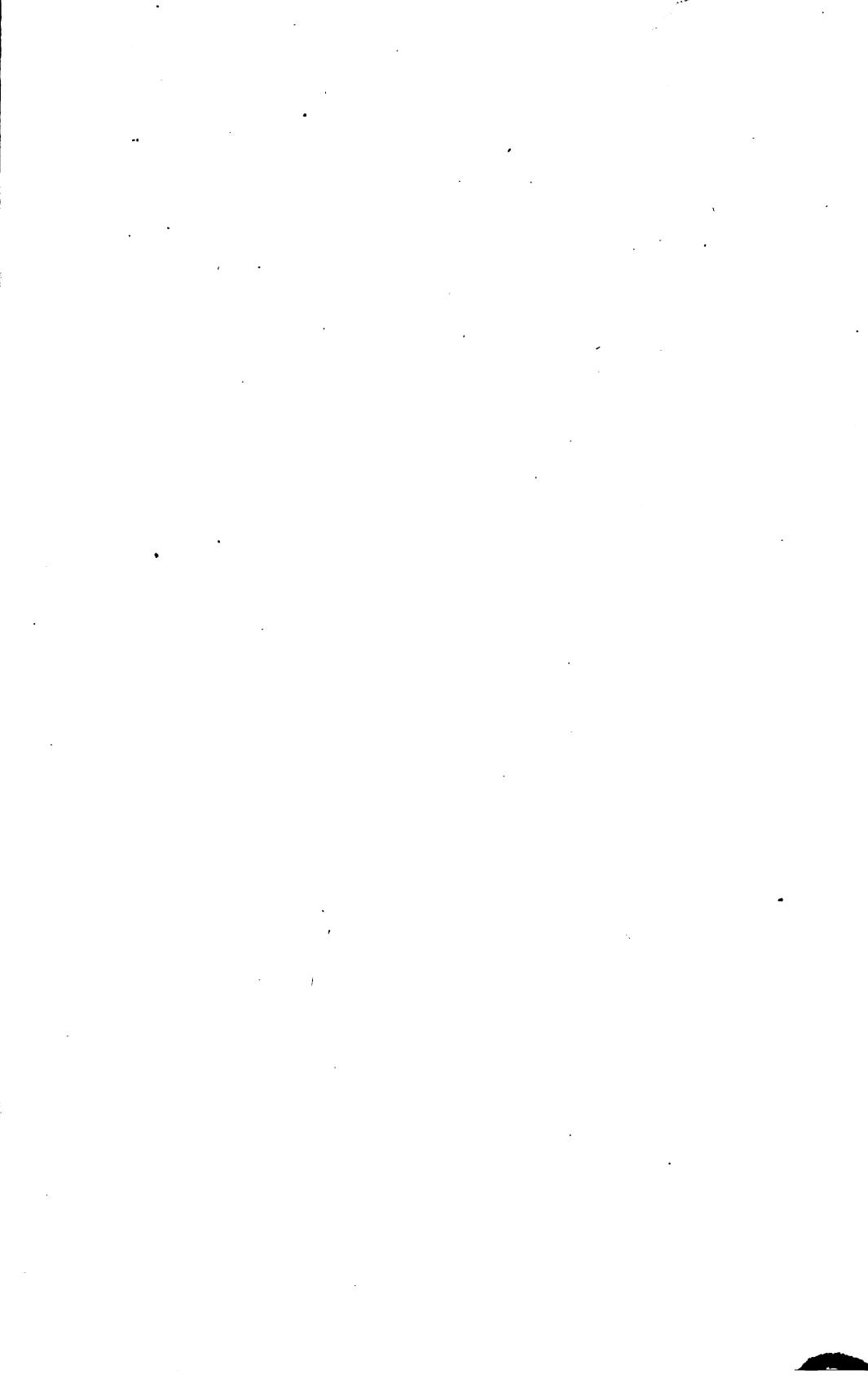


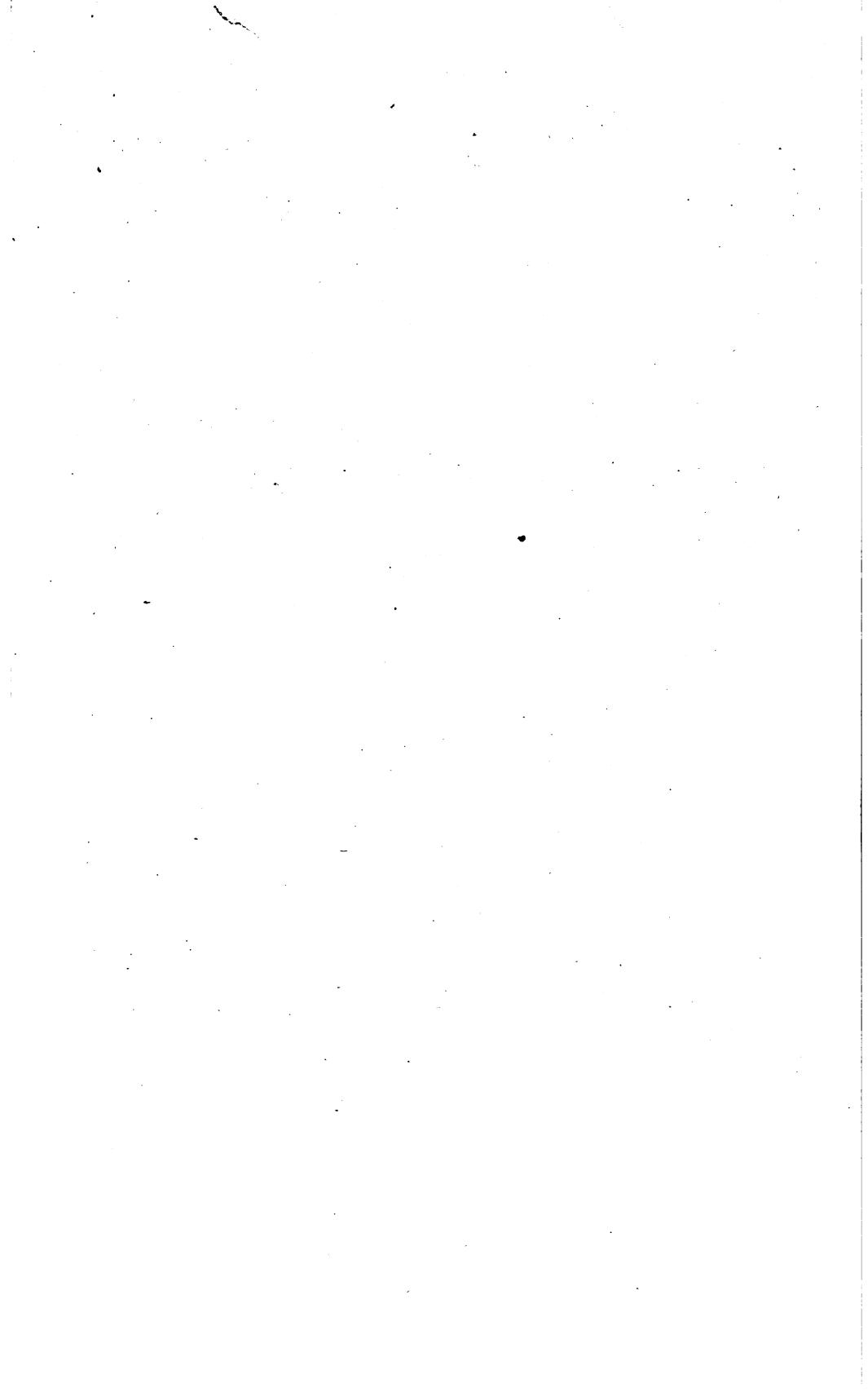
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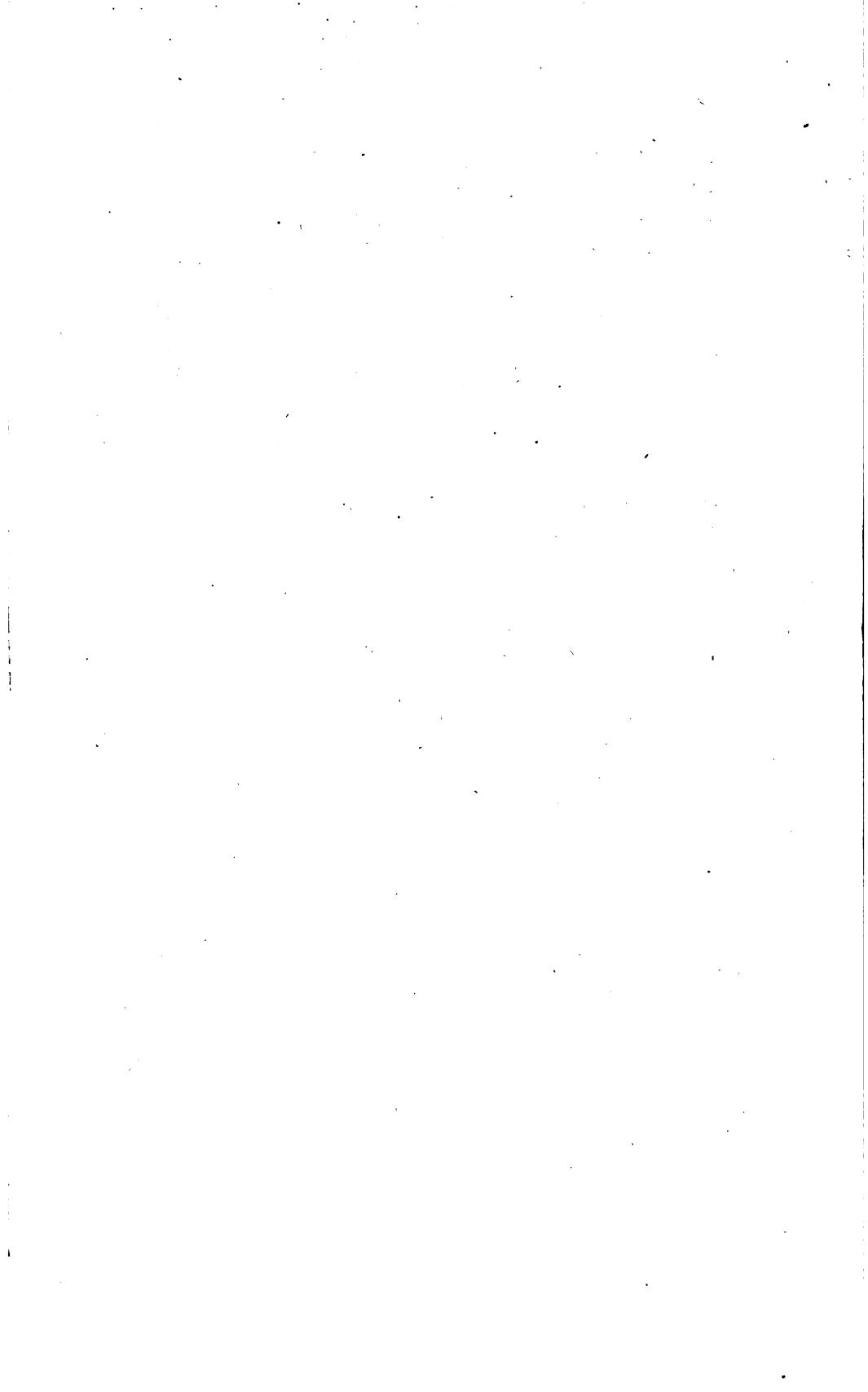
Taylor, Edward F.

1851

M E M O I R

OF

REV. EDWARD L. PARKER.



A

BRIEF MEMOIR
OF
REV. EDWARD L. PARKER,

LATE PASTOR OF THE
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,

DERRY, N. H.

By Samuel K. Taylor, LL.D.

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M E M O I R.

THERE are few incidents in the life of a parish clergyman to give any general interest to a sketch of his character. His life is noiseless and unobserved ; passed in retired labors among his own flock, and away from the conflict of more stirring scenes. It is the men who have stood in the more perilous posts ; men clothed with offices of trust and responsibility ; men who have been conspicuous for original discoveries, for great achievements, or for their agency in bringing about striking moral revolutions, whose personal history attracts the notice or admiration of the world. The biographies of Melanchthon find fewer readers than those of Luther ; but few have heard of the moral heroism of Felix Neff, in his self-denying labors among the Alps, while the story of William Tell is as familiar as household words. It might therefore seem presuming to obtrude upon the public a sketch of a country pastor, whose love of retirement, and the even tenor of whose life, have furnished less than the usual amount of incident for a biographical notice ; yet it seemed not inappropriate to connect with the History of Londonderry a brief account of the Author, particularly, as his pastoral care over one of the churches of that town covers a period of nearly one third of the time since its settlement. It was, moreover, believed that the energy with which he met and surmounted difficulties in early life, the steadiness of his aims, and his fidelity and success in his labors, would not be without interest and instruction to those who might be disposed to peruse the History.

Edward Lutwyche Parker was born in Litchfield, New Hampshire, July 28, 1785. He was named for Edward Goldstone Lutwyche,

"an English gentleman of education and fortune," and a particular friend of his father. His grandfather, Rev. Thomas Parker, was a graduate of Harvard University, and the minister of Dracut, Mass. His father, Doct. Jonathan Parker, also a graduate of Harvard, was a physician of very considerable distinction, excelling particularly as a surgeon, and acquired an extensive practice in the place of his residence, as well as in the adjacent towns, being often sent for from a distance, as a consulting physician. Dr. Parker died in September, 1791, leaving a family of ten children, with scanty means of support, Edward, the youngest but one, being but about six years of age. His early instructions, therefore, were derived almost wholly from his mother. She was a woman of more than ordinary refinement, of much energy and decision of character, and a consistent and earnest Christian. Active and diligent herself, she inculcated the same principles in her children. They were required to perform their appropriate tasks, which they were never able to evade by any expedients, however shrewdly devised. She early imbued their minds with religious truth, knowing that a conviction of their moral accountability would be their surest safeguard, when her own personal instructions could no longer be given. Eight of her ten children, in after life, became consistent professors of religion. How far early maternal instruction was the means of this it is not for us to determine, but doubtless that influence was important.

Edward, the youngest son, was the favorite child. His active and sprightly habits made him the centre of interest in the family circle, a place which he continued to hold in after life. Before he was five years old, he had, in three instances, almost miraculously escaped death; twice from drowning, and once from an attack by a domestic animal, the marks of which he ever after bore. At the period when he was of a suitable age to attend school, the advantages of the common schools of New England were much fewer than at present. Instructors themselves were very imperfectly qualified, and the circle of studies was extremely limited, including little more

than reading, writing, and arithmetic. This meagre course of study was all that Mr. Parker enjoyed in his youth. When he was about twelve years of age, he was placed as a clerk in the store of his brother Thomas, in Bedford, N. H. Here he was brought into scenes of peculiar temptation. The village in which the store was situated, being near the Merrimack River, was the residence and the resort of a large number of persons engaged in rafting and boating, who, at that time, were in the constant and free use of intoxicating drink. A favorite form of it was "flip;" and so constant was the demand for this, that the loggerhead was always hot, ready to perform its indispensable part in the preparation of this choice beverage. Mr. Parker often remarked that he had sold hogsheads of ardent spirit in this form. It will be readily imagined, to what corrupting influences he was exposed, where intoxicating liquors were thus freely used, and where his ears were daily familiar with the lowest vulgarity and profaneness; and yet, to his own amazement, as in after life he looked back upon these scenes, he never contracted the habits of those with whom he was brought in continual contact. Though the habitual use of ardent spirit was at that time almost universal, yet, even under the strongest temptations, he never complied with the practice. In a sermon, preached a few years before his death, he said: "I was in childhood placed amid scenes of peculiar temptation and exposure; yet, though destitute as I then was of the true fear of God, through the influence of maternal instruction and the restraints of a kind Providence, I was kept from contracting habits, or entering upon courses of vice and impiety, into which so many at that time were thrown." The impressions made upon his youthful mind by witnessing the debasing and brutalizing effects of intemperance, rendered him, in later years, the fearless and zealous advocate of every wise measure to correct the evil.

In the discharge of his general duties as clerk in his brother's store, he is described as attracting particular notice for his activity and energy. A part of his business consisted in measuring and

taking an account of lumber, particularly of boards, which he is said to have done with great rapidity. This lumber was sent in rafts to Newburyport, and he, being commissioned to go and dispose of it, sometimes accompanied the raft, but more generally performed the journey each way on foot. As he was at this time a mere boy, and small of his age, he was looked upon with much interest for the shrewdness, accuracy, and despatch which were manifest in all his dealings.

When Mr. Parker was fifteen years of age, the brother in whose store he had been employed failed in business; an event, we are told, which would have occurred still earlier but for the faithful exertions of his young clerk. Being thus thrown out of employment he was invited by another brother, who was a physician in Topsham, Me., to go and reside with him, and act as clerk in his druggist's shop. This invitation he accepted, and remained with his brother about a year. Here he was brought into a still stronger current of temptation than before. To the vice of intemperance, to which he had been exposed, was now added the still more seductive one of gambling. Yet he never yielded; previous resistance had given him double power to overcome his present exposure. Whenever it was possible, he always withdrew from the devotees of the cup and the gaming-board, to a small room alone. At last, sickened by the scenes into which he was daily and nightly thrown, he resolved to leave Topsham, and return to his native place. He did so, performing the journey of one hundred and fifty miles on foot, in the month of March.

Being unable to find such employment as he wished, he left home with the consent of his friends, but without informing them of his plans, knowing the objections they would interpose, and engaged himself as an apprentice to a shoemaker in Billerica, Mass. Here he continued for some time, till his friends, accidentally ascertaining where he was, persuaded him to return home. But there was no business for him there, and his active habits would not allow him to be idle. Accordingly, in connection with a brother, he purchased a

woodlot, got off the lumber, drew it to the river, and rafted it. In the winter, being now seventeen years of age, he offered himself as a teacher of a district school in the present town of Manchester, N. H., then called Derryfield. Though he had but a very limited education, and had never studied English grammar or geography, yet, after due examination, he was approved and engaged to teach the school. At the opening of the school, some of his scholars presented themselves to study English grammar. With a resolution that never failed him in the most trying circumstances, he put himself to the new study with such energy as to be able to teach it with success; and so great was the approbation of his instructions, and of his general management of the school, that he was invited to teach there again the next winter.

After these checkered scenes, by the particular advice of his friends, who saw in him elements of usefulness and success in some higher calling than any to which he had directed his attention, he was induced to prepare himself for the study of medicine. With the little gains acquired by the sale of his lumber and by his school, he entered the academy in Londonderry, at that time, and for many years after, under the charge of Samuel Burnham, M. A., a gentleman of most excellent character, and of some distinction as a teacher. While a member of the academy, he boarded in the family of Rev. Jonathan Brown, the minister of the East Parish, and whose place he was to occupy in a little more than six years. It was during his connection with this school that his attention was first called decidedly to the subject of religion, by a sermon on the Judgment, delivered in the pulpit in which he subsequently preached for so long a period. There can be little doubt that the change wrought in him by the religious impressions made at that time was a thorough and radical one. It invested life with new interest, presented new and more enlarged objects of effort, and pressed upon him higher and stronger motives of action. He soon relinquished the purpose of entering the medical profession; and though entirely destitute of means, except what he might gain by

his own exertions, directed his course of study with reference to a preparation for college, with a view of entering the Christian ministry.

At this time there was a highly excited state of feeling among the people of the East Parish of Londonderry, which had grown out of the opposition of a large minority to the settlement of the Rev. Mr. Brown, and the consequent formation of a Congregational society within the bounds of the parish. Mr. Parker, finding his own mind too much diverted from his studies by the subjects which distracted the parish, left the academy at Londonderry, and placed himself under the instruction of Rev. Dr. Wood, of Boscowen, N. H., who often fitted young men for college. Here he remained until he entered college, with the exception of the time which he spent in teaching. During his residence in Boscowen, at the age of nineteen, he united with the church under the charge of Dr. Wood. With what perseverance and success he prosecuted his studies under his new, as well as under his former instructor, will be evident from the fact, that, in two years and three months after he commenced his studies in the academy at Londonderry, with a view of fitting himself for the medical profession, he entered the junior class in Dartmouth College, having taught school during this time some more than nine months. He went to Hanover on foot, carrying all his effects with him. In after life, he, like many others, often regretted that he had not spent more time in his preparatory and collegiate course.

While a member of college, he made the most faithful use of his time, rising at a very early hour in the morning. A classmate who was familiar with all his habits, says: "He prosecuted his studies with great assiduity. With him, no time was allowed to pass unimproved. He ranked high as a scholar, and was a member of the Phi Beta Kappa society."

His Christian character and influence during his college course attracted particular notice. A classmate, after stating that "he possessed a mind of a high order, strong, and quick of apprehension,"

sion," adds: "but his piety gave the chief lustre to his character. As a Christian, he was exemplary, devout, humble, and cheerful. In conversation and demeanor, he was pleasant and courteous. Probably no one of his class was more highly esteemed for his moral and Christian character than he." Rev. Dr. Shurtleff, late professor in Dartmouth College, and the only one of his college instructors who now survives, says: "It is clear in my recollection, that Mr. Parker stood among the *good scholars* of his class, but was most prominent as a devoted, consistent, and faithful Christian." And adverting to "his conscientious regard for divine truth," as exhibited in the decided and bold measures he took, on one occasion, to defeat the efforts made to diffuse loose and dangerous sentiments, Dr. Shurtleff says: "I silently marked the spirit which prompted him; a fearless determination to resist, at every hazard, the encroachments of error; and the same fidelity and moral courage which he then displayed, were uniformly, so far as I have known and heard, carried out with prudence and good judgment in his subsequent life and ministry." Others have borne similar testimony in regard to the earnestness and consistency of his Christian example, and of the respect in which he was held, as combining in an unusual degree, at that time in college, honorable scholarship with decided piety.

While Mr. Parker was a member of college, regular instruction was given in theology to such as wished it, by the professor of that department, which was then filled by Rev. Dr. Shurtleff. Besides pursuing the prescribed college course, he availed himself of the opportunity thus offered to prosecute his theological studies. In these, as in other studies, he made rapid advances. His professor, referring to the short time in which he prepared to enter the junior class in college, remarks: "His well-known rapidity of mind would give countenance to the report which you mention. Certainly, his progress in theology corresponded with his supposed rapidity in fitting for college."

Mr. Parker supported himself during his college course by teach-

ing school. He often spoke of the good providence which directed him to desirable situations ; of one instance of this kind, he always had the most grateful remembrance. During his senior year, at a season when there was no opportunity of obtaining employment in the district schools, he found himself wholly destitute of means to pay his bills, and knew not what to do. At length, it occurred to him that Richard Lang, Esq., a merchant at Hanover, might wish to employ some one to teach his children. With much diffidence, he concluded to go to Mr. Lang's store, and propose the subject to him. He accordingly went ; and, as soon as he opened the door, Mr. Lang came to him and said : "Mr. Parker, I wish to employ some one to teach my children ; I have been to Professor Shurtleff, to request him to recommend a suitable person, and he recommends you ; are you willing to take the situation ?" The answer can be readily imagined. On the same day, he was comfortably settled in Mr. Lang's family, where he remained several months after he graduated. Oh, how many young men of generous impulses, and with an ardent desire to prepare themselves to be useful in the world, may be found in all our institutions of learning, embarrassed and disheartened for the want of some small pittance of relief, which multitudes would be the richer for giving them !

Mr. Parker graduated in 1807, but continued his theological studies at Hanover, under Prof. Shurtleff, for several months afterward. He was licensed to preach the gospel, Oct. 29, 1807, by the Committee of the Grafton, N. H., presbytery, his license being signed by John Wheelock, John Smith, Roswell Shurtleff, President and Professors in Dartmouth College, and Rev. James Woodward, of Norwich. During the winter, he spent some time in the study of theology with Rev. Dr. Burton, of Thetford, Vt., the zealous advocate and defender of the "Taste Scheme," against the "Exercise Scheme," as promulgated by Dr. Emmons.

About this time he began to make occasional entries in a diary, from which a few extracts will be taken in the course of this sketch.

In view of the ministry upon which he was about to enter, he seems to have had clearer convictions than before of the necessity of vital piety. Hence he says :—

“ I do resolve to give more diligence to be established in the hope of the gospel.”

“ Sensible of the great and momentous study in which I am engaged, and of the importance of entering upon it with right motives, I resolve to devote myself to the examination of my own heart.”

“ I do now resolve to relinquish every earthly object, and to set my affections supremely on God.”

“ I resolve not to suffer the opinions, the pleasures, the flatteries, or the frowns of the world, to influence my conduct. Grant me power, O God, to confirm my feeble resolutions.”

As an evidence of his laborious application to the studies on which he had entered, it may be added, that the time of each day, from five o'clock in the morning till half-past eleven at night, was appropriated to particular duties, including three seasons of devotion. He had an impediment in his speech ; he therefore devoted one hour each day to correct that. He wished to gain a more extensive knowledge of some of the studies of his college course ; he accordingly gave three hours each day to the mathematics, and as many to the languages ; and all this in addition to his principal object, the study of theology.

In the spring of 1808, Mr. Parker took charge of the academy in Salisbury, N. H., for six months, residing in the family of the Rev. Thomas Worcester, pastor of the church in that place. After completing his engagement at Salisbury, he preached for several months at Columbia, Conn. Here he was invited to settle ; but feeling the need of more experience, as well as a more extended course of study, before he connected himself permanently with any society, he declined the call, and placed himself under the instruction of Rev. Dr. Worcester, of Salem, Mass., the first Secretary of the American Board. He remained in this place one year, residing

in the family of Dr. Worcester, and assisting him in his ministerial and parochial duties ; he also taught a school which was connected with Dr. Worcester's society. His ardent piety was not unobserved here. His faithful and earnest labors, during a revival in the winter of 1809-10, are still fresh in the minds of some who were familiar with the scenes of that interesting period. He always looked upon the time spent at Salem as a very valuable preparation for his subsequent labors.

During his residence at Salem, as he passed through the East Parish of Londonderry, now Derry, on his way to visit his friends in Litchfield, he was providentially invited to supply the pulpit for two Sabbaths. This led to further engagements, which he met by going to Derry on Saturday afternoon, and returning to Salem on Monday in time to commence his school. As soon as he had fulfilled the engagement he had made with Dr. Worcester, he received a call to become the pastor of the Presbyterian church in the East Parish of Londonderry. This call he accepted, and was ordained September 12, 1810. Rev. Dr. Worcester, his friend and recent instructor, preached the ordination sermon. In addressing the people on that occasion, Dr. Worcester said, with reference to the pastor elect: "We have the pleasing confidence that our young brother, who is now to be set over you in the Lord, will prove to you an ascension-gift, a good man and full of the Holy Ghost, an able and faithful minister of the New Testament. This confidence we have not taken up lightly ; it has resulted from what we have seen and known, and with respect to some of us, at least, it has been strengthened and confirmed by intimate and endearing acquaintance."

Just before his ordination, he had evidently made the responsible duties of the ministry, and the various ways by which these might be most successfully accomplished, a matter of protracted and prayerful study. He had taken a comprehensive view of the difficulties to be met, the prejudices to be overcome, and felt that he needed more than human wisdom to render his ministry success-

ful. There was no shrinking from the responsibilities of the station, because it was beset with trials ; no desire even to avoid what might come in the way of duty ; his only solicitude was to know how he might approve himself to Him who had put him into the ministry.

The following extracts from his diary, will show his interest in adopting and carrying out such principles and rules, as would fit him most successfully for the work on which he was about to enter.

“ I will consider love to God and zeal for his glory as my highest duty, and study to improve daily in these divine affections ; and will judge of my progress in them, not by transient fervor, but by my habitual temper ; by my faithful performance of the self-denying duties of Christianity ; by my cheerful acquiescence in all God’s dispensations, and by the love, humility, and watchfulness which I may be enabled to exhibit to those around me.”

“ I will cultivate an habitual sense of God’s presence, and of my accountability to him ; of the shortness of time, and my obligations to improve it.”

“ I will be particularly watchful against the love of praise or distinction, as well as the fear of shame ; desisting from my purpose when I feel these to be my only motives, and endeavoring by prayer to overcome them when I perceive them combined with proper motives.”

“ I will be open to conviction, ever receiving correction and reproof meekly and thankfully ; never questioning merely for the sake of dispute, nor retorting on my reprobation.”

“ I will in no case affect knowledge which I have not ; I will not put off to a future day the business of the present, but will apply myself to it, never yielding to sloth or the love of ease, but exercising a constant and self-denying attention to my proper work.”

“ I will watch particularly against all heartlessness towards inferiors, and especially such as need my help. I will listen kindly to their representations, and render them all the assistance in my power.”

"I will guard against everything, in look and manner, which might tend to wound the feelings of others."

"I will not allow the conduct of others towards me to lessen my kindness and good-will to them."

"I will consider the study of my heart one main business of my life, and I will enter every evening, if possible, into a serious review of the day past, and will solemnly consider the fitness of my soul to enter the eternal world."

In 1811, he married Miss Mehetabel Kimball, daughter of Deacon Stephen Kimball, of Hanover, N. H. She was to him a worthy companion, and a valued helper in his responsible duties. The connection then formed continued for thirty-nine years. She still survives, residing with her youngest son. They had four children; two sons and two daughters. The younger daughter died at the age of about three years; their other children are still living.

The parish with which Mr. Parker was connected, required unusual labor and prudence. It stretched over a large territory, rendering much time necessary to visit the remote parts of it. There had also been much alienation between the two societies which had existed there for several years; the appropriate duties of the ministry had been to some extent neglected, and, when performed, were rendered in a measure nugatory, by the unhappy state of feeling existing in the place. And though, at the time of Mr. Parker's settlement, the two societies had with entire unanimity united in giving him a call, yet the old wounds could not at once be healed. A conviction of duty as well as interest impelled them to bury their differences, and to unite their strength in the support of an efficient ministry. Still, there were elements pent up, which a slight cause would at any time call into action. This state of things Mr. Parker well understood, for we find in his diary at this time, this resolution: "Resolved to be very watchful and circumspect in regard to everything I say, considering the present state of the society." The ministry on which

he entered under such circumstances was eminently successful. Not that there was always entire harmony or no personal dissatisfaction; not that a different course of measures and a different style of preaching would not have been acceptable to some; not that he himself was a stranger to trials, some of which made his nights wearisome and sleepless; but the general results of the connection between him and the parish were much more happy, both for the temporal and spiritual interests of the people, were attended with more harmony and mutual confidence, than either could have dared to anticipate.

On the day of his ordination, he entered among other resolutions, the following: "*I now resolve to give myself wholly to the work.*" This was the great motto of his life. This resolution, adopted, not from constraint, but under a high sense of duty, brought one single object of life before him, as the centre towards which everything must tend, and made the exhausting and self-denying labors of the ministry a source of rich enjoyment. Singleness of aim, a hearty devotedness to the work, is one of the surest pledges of success in any undertaking, and is nowhere more needful than in the ministry. When this office is entered with a divided purpose, with an eye as much upon the personal advantages it may give as upon the solemn duties it imposes and the fruits that should spring from it; when it is sought with a view to gratify a literary taste, or as a field for the display of learning or eloquence, or because it may elevate him who is clothed with it to a more refined circle in society; when any one, or all of these become paramount to the true business of the ministry,—the saving of men's souls,—that sacred office is so far prostituted, and the results which may always sooner or later be expected from the faithful performance of its duties, fail of being attained. It has been justly said, that it is hard to be a faithful minister; and with equal justice it has been replied, it is harder to be an unfaithful one.

Mr. Parker entered the ministry with no such divided purpose.

"I resolve to give myself wholly to the work. I determine to realize that I have but one Master to serve, and to make it my great aim to please him." Thus he resolves, and thus he writes, on the day of his ordination; and how faithfully the pledge was kept, the people to whom he ministered for forty years can best judge. How earnestly he labored; how little he consulted his own ease; how entirely he merged his private interests in the welfare of his people; with what restless anxiety he watched for opportunities to do good; how he divided to his flock the Word of God, giving to each a portion in due season; how he warned and entreated them; how he went from house to house, conversing with those unreconciled to God; how often he was by the bedside of the sick and the dying, pointing them to their only refuge; with what deep sympathy he imparted consolation to the afflicted and broken-hearted; with what words of gentleness he strove to win the affection and confidence of the lambs of his flock, that the truth might take effect in their minds also; what a fervor and spirit of piety mingled in all his duties; in a word, how faithful, how exemplary and blameless, was his ministry, they know well, who, for so many years, were witnesses of these things.

His theological views were consistent, scriptural, and what are termed evangelical. While he had studied most of the leading theologians, and was familiar with their differences of opinion, and their varying shades of representation and conception, he had studied the Bible more, and admitted or rejected particular views, according as they coincided or were at variance with what, after patient study, he believed to be the teaching of the Word of God. Of the doctrines of the Bible he had clear and well-defined conceptions, apprehending the extent and limits of each, as well as their interdependence, and seeing how symmetrical and harmonious a system they formed when combined together. Hence, without prying into the hidden mysteries of God, or trying to comprehend and explain them, he was able to " vindicate the ways of God to men." These doctrines were presented clearly and forcibly, but

never in a manner suited to make the hearers of them theological wranglers, or the disciples of a particular theological teacher. No one ever heard from his pulpit the distinctive views or modes of philosophizing adopted by Edwards, Hopkins, Dwight, Burton, or Emmons. His aim was, not so much to make theologians as Christians, not so much to give theoretical as practical instruction.

Mr. Parker possessed highly respectable, but not distinguished talents as a preacher. If it could be said that he preached few great sermons, it could also be said that he rarely, if ever, preached a poor one. Though his mind was not characterized by any marked originality, it was strong and vigorous, quick of perception and rapid in its operations. It was not one-sided, or marred by any prominent defects, but was well-balanced and well-disciplined. His sermons were not elaborate productions, modelled after severe rules ; they bore no striking marks of the rhetorician's skill, and there was little in them to gratify the fancy or imagination ; but they were always sound and instructive, always exhibited consecutive and well-arranged thought ; they were plain, direct, and earnest, making forcible appeals to the conscience, urging upon men their duty, and portraying the fearful consequences of neglecting it ; with the deepest solemnity too, did he exhort and entreat them to become reconciled to God. And such was the evident sincerity with which his appeals and exhortations were made, so entirely free was he from heartlessness or formality in them, that none could sit beneath his ministrations without the conviction that he was a man of God, who knew and felt the weighty import of the message he had been commissioned to deliver.

The subjects of his discourses were well chosen ; he had no favorite circle of themes on which to preach, to the neglect of all others. His aim was to declare the whole counsel of God, selecting at a particular time such subjects as he supposed the wants of his people required. In this he was remarkably judicious. Being constantly among his parishioners, and acquainting himself with their peculiar state of feeling, with their misapprehensions of

truth or prejudices against it, he was fully prepared to meet their various necessities. The state of the times, passing events, and solemn providences, he often seized upon as themes of discourse. But whatever the theme, whether doctrinal or practical, historical or biographical, his great aim was to enforce moral truth on the minds of his hearers.

In the discharge of his appropriate duties as pastor, he had few if any superiors. He has often and justly been called a "model pastor." Certainly, in the untiring and faithful manner in which the duties of this office were met, he has been surpassed by none. Not even Dr. Chalmers, in his unwearied efforts to make his pastoral influence felt among the ten or twelve thousand parishioners of the Tron Church Parish, or the Parish of St. John's, can be said to have performed a greater amount of pastoral labor. The labors of the pastor should ever coexist with those of the preacher; if the former are merged in the latter, so far the preacher neglects one of the most effective elements of his strength. Each is a handmaid of the other. To be most successful as a preacher one must be a faithful pastor, and he who would carry with him the greatest influence in his pastoral circuits, must remember that, however constantly and faithfully these more private ministrations may be performed, they can never supersede the necessity of the well studied and vigorous instructions of the pulpit. How readily and skilfully can he suit his teachings to particular states of mind, when he has learned these by mingling with his people; and how cordial a reception will he meet at the homes of his parishioners; what an influence will his private teachings have over them; how readily will they open their hearts, if on the Sabbath he has ably and faithfully instructed them from the oracles of God.

The views of Mr. Parker with regard to the importance of the pastoral office, as well as the character and extent of his labors in it, are happily expressed in the following extract from the Congregational Journal, written by the Editor, Rev. Henry Wood,

"Confessedly, preaching is the great work of the ministry ; but it is not its whole work. The natural and acquired abilities which give it interest and power, the reason which invigorates it, the taste which adorns it, the imagination which enlivens it, and the eloquence which enforces it, are of high value, and worthy of admiration ; at the same time, there are other qualifications equally potential in securing success, if not equally attractive and dazzling. The kind heart, the wisely spoken word, the judicious measures, the visit to the house of poverty, outgushing sympathy with mourning and sorrow, interest in the parishioner's temporal as well as spiritual welfare, the familiar conversation, the cultivated intimacy with childhood and youth throughout the parish, the prayer at the family altar, or at the bedside of the sick and the dying, the conference in the school-room, and the prayer meeting in the private dwelling, if they do not exhibit the talent which prepares the impressive and admired sermon, are indispensable to its effect."

"The power of the pulpit is not like that of gravitation or the mechanical forces, which may be calculated on infallible principles ; the state of mind in those who hear, is an important element in the computation of preaching power. Eloquence is impotent when it is judged to be heartless, and the most logical sermons fail to convince and impress, when it is suspected that they are extorted by the stern demands of pulpit duty, rather than the simple products of the prompting heart. It is the volunteer offices of the week which give much of its force to the exalted sermon of the Sabbath,—offices which might have been omitted without censure, and were performed with manifest pains-taking and self-denial. These, attesting to the sincerity of the heart, make eloquence more eloquent, and even common-place impressive and mighty."

"The churches of New Hampshire have just lost,—no, not lost, but parted with one whose life both suggested our remarks and illustrated them. Rev. Edward L. Parker, of Derry, was a-

model pastor, exceeded by none other in the State; it is hardly too much to add, by no one in New England. A distinguished minister, who for many years had sustained the pastoral relation to an important congregation, and afterwards became the learned professor in a theological seminary and university, after spending a few weeks in the family of Mr. Parker, and observing his wisdom and tact, remarked, that he excelled in these respects all the ministers he had ever known, and deserved to be studied by young preachers as a model. His talents as a preacher were respectable, but not eminent; always judicious and instructive, he was never eloquent. But his pastoral influence, like the air, was diffused and felt over his entire parish. In illustration of his life and labors, it may be stated, such was his attention to the young that we learned from his own lips what was affirmed by others, that he knew the name of every child in his large parish of nearly two thousand souls. His labors in the outskirts of his parish were as abundant as they were arduous. He was wont to remark, that if he fortified the *outposts* he did not fear for the citadel."

"If Mr. Parker's parish had reason to boast of its pastor, the pastor had reason to boast of his parish, which in its good order, its intelligence, its solid religious character, its harmony, its steady progress, and the number of its youth it educated and sent forth to honorable and useful stations, is hardly excelled by any other in New England."

For about thirty years of Mr. Parker's ministry, his parish contained nearly four hundred families, all of which he looked upon as his pastoral charge, and having claims upon him for instruction and sympathy. At times, he would make appointments to visit in particular neighborhoods, on certain days, calling at every house, and in this way making the circuit of the whole parish; at other times, his visits were less formal and systematic, having reference to the circumstances and wants of particular families. His attentions to the afflicted were unremitting, day after day was he found at the bedside of the sick and dying; the earnest inquirer he

sought out, that he might impart the light and instruction of the gospel; the infirm and aged, who could not attend on his public teachings, to their spiritual wants he ministered in their own dwellings. Sometimes he devoted an entire week in visiting, with the single view of awakening among parents and children an interest in attending the Sabbath school. His visits, whether for this purpose or for others, were more frequent to the remoter parts of the town than to families more centrally situated. Wherever he went, he usually carried small books or tracts, particularly adapted to the young, which he distributed among them, both for the purpose of instructing them, as well as winning their love and confidence. Such was his desire to be among his people, that it was with difficulty he could be persuaded to be absent a few days, even to visit his friends; and when he did so, he was always impatient to return; and whenever he knew that any circumstances called him to any part of his parish, he could never be induced to give himself quiet or rest at home, unless the state of the weather rendered it wholly imprudent to go abroad. Never was there a parish which had a more faithful or laborious pastor.

Mr. Parker had a special interest in the younger portion of his parish, and this interest was accompanied by corresponding efforts for their improvement. He not only felt but he acted on the principle, that youth is the seed-time of life. Some years previous to the establishment of Sabbath schools in New England, he adopted measures to give the youth of his parish a more extensive and exact knowledge of the Bible. The residents of Derry, thirty-five years ago, will remember the two societies then in existence with this object in view. The "Adelphi," and the "Young Ladies Catechetical Society," will ever be held in grateful remembrance by not a few of their members. These societies met once each month, though not at the same time. Particular subjects for examination were previously assigned by the pastor, and the members of the society were expected to illustrate and establish these by texts of Scripture. Subjects were not unfrequently given to the

members of the Adelphi (the society for the young men), on which to write ; this they often did, at considerable length. In some instances, the meetings of this society were held in public. In such cases, the members were questioned in the presence of the audience, and also read the dissertations which they had written. Few parishes had a more promising circle of young men than were to be found here, before the advantages held out to them from abroad induced them to leave their native place. It must be added, that some of the choicest spirits went to an early grave. Nor is it out of place to remark, that the young ladies connected with the society established for their improvement, have been distinguished for stability of character ; and many of them have been ornaments in their respective spheres.

As another means of improving the young men, Mr. Parker invited them to meet in the vestry on Sabbath noon, and at other times, to listen to the reading of some valuable book. Sometimes, too, meetings were appointed in the school-houses in the remote parts of the parish, for the same purpose. Hawes's Lectures to Young Men, were read in this way in different parts of the town. For the younger part of his charge, he had other measures. By various inducements, he would persuade them to commit the answers to Scripture Questions, and also the Assembly's Shorter Catechism. For many years, his custom was to give a pocket Testament, containing his own name and that of the one to whom it was given, to every child who would recite the Catechism perfectly. Much interest was in this way awakened in the study of this valuable summary of truth ; and the prize which the successful competitors obtained, was valued both as an evidence of diligence and success, and also as being a present from their pastor. And will not these little mementos of a pastor's affection and interest have an increased value, now that he who inscribed those youthful names, has ceased from his labors in their behalf, and is silent in death ?

On occasions of temperance and Sabbath school celebrations, so

earnest was he that all the children might have their minds interested in these objects by the ceremonies, as well as by the direct instructions, that the writer well remembers him, hurrying in different directions over the common, where the processions were usually formed, picking up a child here and another there, and finding places for them with the others.

His efforts for the general education of the young were of the same earnest character. During almost the whole of his ministry, he visited the eight or ten district schools, each four times a year, — at the commencement and the close of the summer and winter terms. These were no formal visits, made to get rid of an irksome duty. He went with his mind alive to the interests which centred about those humble seats of learning. He watched and noted, with scarcely less than paternal interest, the development and growth of each mind. This interest on the part of the pastor was not without its effect on the minds of the scholars. They knew that their progress was marked, and were incited by it to greater efforts. A failure at an examination is always humbling, but it is doubly so when made in the presence of one whom we know to feel a lively interest in our improvement. The writer has not yet forgotten his own mortified feelings at failing to perform an exercise in the presence of his pastor, nor the resolution he then formed, not to be found deficient on a similar occasion. How many youthful minds have been thus quickened to nobler exertions, cannot be told ; but without doubt, not a few owe their first zealous impulse to study to the manifest interest and the counsels of their pastor at these school visitations.

Mr. Parker was also deeply interested in the higher institutions of learning in the town. From their first establishment, he was a trustee in the Pinkerton Academy, and in the Adams Female Academy, and took a prominent part in their organization, and in advising and directing in regard to their various interests. While there were at times marked differences of opinion in regard to the general measures to be adopted, and likewise some cause for

strong personal feeling, it is believed that in all cases he zealously sought their best good without reference to his own private feelings, or the odium that might attach to him from advocating views different from those of his associates. Certainly, no member of either board had his sympathies more warmly enlisted in behalf of these institutions; and no one was more frequently found at the quarterly examinations. At the time of his death he was the president of both boards.

The remarks already made show the laborious habits of Mr. Parker; but this feature deserves to be brought out still more prominently. It may be said with little hazard, that no minister of New England performed a greater amount of pastoral labor, and that no one preached as many times within the same period, as he did. In favorable weather, he usually preached three times on the Sabbath,—the third service being held in some one of the school-houses or in a private house. Besides this, he often held in the summer a prayer meeting or teacher's meeting, before morning service, and always attended a Bible class or the Sabbath school during the intermission of the public exercises. And it is judged that on an average he preached three lectures a week, in different parts of the town; in seasons of religious interest the number being much greater. The following extracts from his memoranda, embracing two weeks, commencing with the first of January, will exhibit the general character and amount of his labors abroad among his people during the week.

“*Monday.* Visited Mr. W., being sick with fever, but recovering; also Mrs. H., very low with consumption. Her hope is firm, desirous to depart. Afternoon, Monthly Concert.

“*Tuesday.* Visited Mrs. McK., Mr. D., Mr. P., and others in the neighborhood. In the evening, attended a meeting of professors of religion at Mr. P's; serious and I hope profitable meeting.

“*Wednesday.* Visited Mr. P., whose wife recently died. Attended a meeting of professors, and those who were serious, at

Mr. N's; meeting full. One person expressed the hope of having obtained light and comfort the day before from the Word of God; may it prove genuine. In the evening, attended a similar meeting at Mr. C's. I have now fulfilled my appointment of visiting the church in their respective neighborhoods, with a view to ascertain their spiritual state, and to concert measures to be adopted and pursued to revive religion in their hearts and among those around them. The effect has been, I trust, favorable. I feel much satisfied with the course pursued, as I find it has served to rouse many who had begun to slumber.

“ Thursday. Attended a conference meeting at Mrs. C's.

“ Friday. Visited Mr. M's family, and left some tracts. Also Mr. P's; had an opportunity to converse with his son; hope that it may not prove in vain. Visited Mr. N., Mrs. G., Mr. H., Mr. N. Found him resting on the dangerous ground that a sinner must wait God's time. Visited Mr. G's, Mr. D's, and Mr. S's. In the evening, attended a conference at Mr. G's.”

“ Monday. Visited a school near Mr — ; dined with Mr. F; conversed freely with him on the subject of delay; afterwards visited the school in — .

“ Tuesday. Attended the funeral of — ; visited at Mrs. T's.

“ Wednesday. Visited Mr. P., Mr. — . Conversed particularly with him on the subject of his suspension; admonished him of his critical situation, which he received kindly. In the evening, preached a lecture at Mr. A's.

“ Thursday. Visited Mrs. C's, and preached a lecture in the school-house near Mr. W's.”

The next week he visited one school, fourteen families, preached four lectures, and attended an inquiry meeting. The following extracts from his journal, will show the strong interest which prompted these labors: —

“ I will cherish love for my people, and feel that for every soul I must give account.”

“ I will prepare a list of my people, and will in the course of

the year if practicable, and often if I can, apply divine truth to the heart of each, personally."

"I will converse with my people more freely and more directly on the great subject of religion, as I have opportunity, and let no occasion pass unimproved."

The history of his pastoral labors can never be written; they could have been fully understood only by going with him on his visits to schools, to families, to individuals, and by witnessing his deep interest in their behalf, and the faithful manner in which he discharged his duties to them.

Notwithstanding this amount of labor abroad, he secured time for study and for the preparation of his discourses. But this he did only by the strictest economy. No one could find more hours in a day than he; nor could any one turn to better account the fragments of time. He could never be found idle. Some valuable author was constantly by him, which was taken up when he had a leisure moment. He had a keen relish for study, and it was no task for him to turn his mind, at once, to the subjects he wished to consider. While his reading was by no means limited, it could not be said to be extensive. It embraced but comparatively few authors, but they were worth the reading, and were well digested. With those writers who believe in the infinite divisibility of thought, he had no patience. He would frequently speak of the condensing process which needed to be applied to many authors. Though his sermons, as before remarked, were not elaborate productions, they were by no means hastily prepared. The plan and general arrangement of them he made as he rode on horseback from place to place among his people, and subsequently wrote them out in the quiet of his study. He was a man of system; he had a system in his studies, and a system in his parochial and other duties. This gave him an amount of time for the numerous demands made upon him, which would seem incredible to those who do everything without a plan.

Mr. Parker was a man of sound judgment. He formed his plans

intelligently and judiciously, rarely making a mistake in regard to their practicability. His judgment was often put to a severe test in determining the course to be pursued in critical emergencies, but he seldom took a wrong step. This shielded him from the difficulties into which so many men are constantly running. He was not a man to run hastily after any new or popular notions, merely because they were such; nor was he a man to be carried away by any popular current. Neither his opinions nor measures were characterised by any extremes; they were neither radical nor so conservative as to admit of no departure from what usage or time might have established. He took practical and safe views of whatever came before him, and was ever esteemed a wise and valuable counsellor by his brethren in the ministry.

While Mr. Parker was not liable to be deceived by new movements, or to run into them because they were new, his good judgement was manifested in his readiness to adopt any measures, from whatever source they might come, provided they promised substantial, permanent good. It is believed that the first temperance society in New Hampshire was formed among his people; and he was among the very first in the State to introduce the system of Sabbath school instruction.

He was well acquainted with human nature, and formed a correct estimate of character. He was quick to detect the prejudices of men, their particular bias and varied motives. He knew who had an honest heart, and who, only an honest appearance. He was not deceived by smooth words, nor misled by a show of friendship. Modest and retiring worth, too, he never failed to see and appreciate, however rough and forbidding the exterior.

With a sound judgment was united a remarkable prudence. The former enabled him to see what was wise, the latter kept him from doing what was unwise. Judgment, gave him an insight into the characters of men; prudence, put him on his guard against giving them unnecessary offence. The former devises wise measures, the latter keeps out of the way influences which might

prevent their accomplishment. These two characteristics were happily combined in Mr. Parker, and to their influence is to be attributed much of the success of his ministry, as well as the general harmony among his people. These are important elements of success in any situation in life, but especially in the ministry. There are states of feeling and times of excitement both among individuals and an entire society, when a false step or even an imprudent expression may prove disastrous to a pastor's influence and counteract the benefits of his past labors. Mr. Parker's prudence did not degenerate into timidity, though in some cases a bolder and more decided course might have been wiser. It was not a mere negative virtue, whose only merit consists in preventing men from acting, lest they may act wrong; nor was it a compromise of duty for the sake of a dead quietism. It was a studious effort in all his ministerial duties, in all his relations as a citizen, to do nothing whereby his ministry might be blamed, or its influence impaired. It showed itself in foreseeing and preventing the occasions of evil; in pouring oil on the troubled waters; in studying fitting times and seasons in which to rebuke any prevailing evil; in addressing with a spirit of kindness mingled with fidelity the erring ones of his flock, instead of bringing a railing accusation against them.

An incident which occurred but a few weeks before his death, will show how sensitive he was to whatever might in any way prejudice the mind against the truth. The Sabbath school was held in the vestry, which is adjacent to the entrance-hall, where many persons usually stand during intermission. The door to the vestry would often be left open; and some persons, not connected with the Sabbath school, would stand near the door to hear what was said, while the conversation of others was a serious annoyance to the exercises of the school. To send some one to shut the door, would deprive those who wished it of an opportunity to hear, and others too might regard it as a mark of censure towards themselves; and who could tell the consequences of an act appar-

ently so unimportant? He was unwilling, therefore, that any one should close the door, but said to the superintendent: "Can you not put a spring on the door, which will always close it when it is opened?" To the unreflecting this might seem the merest trifling, but whoever understands the nature of the human mind, its nice susceptibilities, the slight causes which often give it a permanent direction for good or for evil, and that the destiny of individuals is sometimes so delicately poised that a feather's weight might turn the scale, will not regard it as an unimportant circumstance, whether that door were closed by conscious or unconscious agency. The spring was soon put upon the door, but the watchful and solicitous pastor never entered the room afterwards.

Mr. Parker was a man of ardent piety, and his Christian character was eminently consistent and exemplary. "No one becomes a villain at once," said the Roman satirist, and with more truth may it be said that no one becomes an eminent Christian at once. The formation of character, whether good or bad, is progressive; it is not the work of a moment; time and appropriate influences are requisite. Particularly is this the case in forming and perfecting that character which the poet has justly termed the "highest style of man." Mr. Parker recognized this principle in the cultivation of piety. He devoted much time to prayer, usually having three seasons of private devotion daily. He had also special seasons of fasting and prayer. It was one of his resolutions to devote the last Saturday of each month to this object. He was a constant and prayerful student of the Bible. He always rose early in the morning, and before his mind was engrossed with other things, he gave the first hours of the day to the study of the Scriptures; and as he grew older, they became more and more a favorite study. He often remarked that he found in them inexhaustible treasures. Those who were for any time in his family, will remember how often he was seen with his Bible in his hand. This he studied, not merely as a biblical critic, though his Greek Testament gives abundant evidence that he had not neglected that

duty ; but particularly that he might imbibe the spirit of its teachings, and draw from it that nourishment whereby he might grow in grace. His piety was not fitful and intermittent, at one time ardent and at another without any evidence of vitality ; there was a remarkable uniformity and symmetry in it, much more than is noticeable in most Christians. Amid the general declensions in the church, the fire did not go out on his altar, but burned with an almost uniform brilliancy. Indeed, when the piety of others shone but dimly, he felt the need of cultivating with increased watchfulness his own graces. The people of his late charge will remember the earnestness and fervor of his appeals both in public and private, when a spirit of worldliness had made them forgetful of higher interests. The following extracts from different parts of his diary, while they imply his own convictions of the low attainments he had made in holiness, give evidence of his earnest endeavors to grow into a nearer resemblance to his great Pattern and Exemplar.

"I resolve to be more frequent and earnest in prayer. I resolve to read the Scriptures more attentively, and with self-application."

"I will aim after singleness of heart, and devote more time to devotion."

On recovering from sickness, he says : "May it be so sanctified as to be instrumental in leading me to greater spirituality and to be more devoted to the duties of my office."

"I will maintain a devotional frame and a more spiritual conversation."

"As I am less engrossed this week than usual, I resolve to dismiss all other subjects from my mind, and to make the attainment of a good hope in Christ my special concern."

"How many precious moments have I wasted, which should have been consecrated to the cultivation of piety."

"I resolve to be more engaged in my great work ; to strive to advance religion in my heart and life ; to suffer no other object to divert my attention."

"I fear I do not make advances in the divine life. I find from unhappy experience that the least neglect of duty, the least perplexity about the world, proves destructive to the soul. May I be excited to live nearer to God, and may I enjoy more of the light of his countenance."

"I now determine to seek after holiness, to be much in prayer, to live above the world, to feel myself no longer my own but Christ's, to be employed by him in the service of this people, over whom I am placed as a spiritual watchman. I will especially guard against worldly cares and anxieties. I will redeem time, and consider every hour lost which is not employed in some way to promote my personal holiness and my usefulness as a minister of Christ. I will do more and more every day to promote the salvation of men."

The following was entered in a note-book, while he was at Philadelphia. "During my absence in attending the General Assembly, as I shall be unincumbered with domestic concerns and parochial duties, I determine to improve the time at my command in attending more particularly to the state of my heart, and the evidence of my piety."

About five years before his death, after he had made arrangements which relieved him almost entirely from domestic cares, he says: "As I am, by a kind providence, in circumstances more favorable to an entire consecration of myself to the work of the ministry, I resolve to free my mind as much as possible from worldly cares, and to study to promote in every practicable way my own happiness and the spiritual interests of others, especially of the souls committed to my charge. I resolve to give myself more to prayer; each day to present the case of some one before God."

The measure of good which he accomplished, whether greater or less, cannot be told. Who can follow the waves of influence, either for good or for evil, in their ever-widening circles? But that he did much in promoting a spirit of harmony among the people of his charge, in correcting or preventing various evils, in raising the

standard of education, in elevating the general character of the people, in awakening interest in the great benevolent operations of the day, and above all in bringing many under the controlling power of the truth, will not be called in question. At the time of his ordination, the church contained ninety-eight members; at some periods of his ministry, before the formation of the church in the Lower Village, and the removal of quite a number of families and individuals into the several manufacturing villages which have grown up in the vicinity, the church contained over three hundred members. At the time of his death, the number was two hundred and eighty, about forty of these being non-residents. During his pastoral office, about five hundred were added to the church by profession.

In the course of his ministry, Mr. Parker published several sermons, most of them on funeral occasions. On the death of Elder John Crocker; James Parker, Esq., of Bedford, N. H.; Elder James Pinkerton; Rev. Amasa A. Hayes, pastor of the church in Londonderry; Elder Samuel Burnham, his early preceptor; Miss N. M. Clark, who was to have accompanied the late Rev. A. K. Hinsdale, as a missionary to Mosul; Rev. Calvin Cutler, pastor of the church in Windham, N. H. He also published a "Century Sermon," commemorating the settlement of Londonderry, delivered April 22, 1819; a sermon at the ordination of Rev. Abijah Cross, over the first Congregational church in Salisbury, N. H.; also two sermons on the Supreme Divinity of Christ, in 1827. These two discourses were considered an able defence of the truth they were designed to establish. The Century Sermon may be considered as the germ of the History of Londonderry. It awakened much interest at the time, in regard to the early settlement of the town, and the edition then published was soon exhausted. Application being made to the author from time to time for copies of this sermon, which he was unable to supply, he was frequently urged to prepare a more full account of the early settlement and subsequent history of the town. But he felt that

his ministerial duties were paramount to all others, and that he could not comply with such a request without interfering with his obligations to his parish. Nothing therefore was done towards the preparation of the work till four or five years since, when he had made such arrangements in regard to his domestic and secular affairs as to allow him more time for such a purpose. And even when he commenced the work, it was with the full purpose that it should not diminish the amount of his ministerial labors. If he ever departed from this purpose, it was only during the few last months of his life, when he evidently began to feel, that what he did must be done quickly.

Mr. Parker was a man of strong and vigorous constitution, which he retained in an unusual degree till nearly the close of his life. He was rarely subject to sickness or disease of any kind. For the first thirty-six years of his ministry, he was absent from the pulpit only seven Sabbaths on account of ill health. About four years since, he experienced the first symptoms of the disease which finally terminated his life. It was a pain in the region of the heart, at first causing but little anxiety, and at no time affecting his general health, or his ability to devote himself to the ordinary duties of his office. Any unusual physical exertion, however, gave him considerable pain. On consulting physicians in regard to the nature of the difficulty, it was pronounced a disease of the heart, technically called *angina pectoris*. There was no occasion to apprehend any immediate danger from the disease, particularly as his health, during the last six months before his death, was generally good; still, he was evidently convinced that his life was precarious, and might at any time terminate suddenly. But he had no fear, in view of such an event; he spoke of it from time to time, to some members of his family, with perfect composure. Indeed, he was never more cheerful, and even playful, than during the few last months of his life. The last time his daughter visited him, he conversed freely with her respecting some plans he wished to have adopted in case of his death. In a letter to her, a few

weeks before he died, he says: "I hope I can truly say, I do not feel so much concern as to my health and life on my own account, as on that of your mother, and my dear family and people, for whose good I may yet be in some measure instrumental. We are truly happy when we can say: 'Not my will but thine be done.'"

On the Sabbath, July 14, 1850, he exchanged with the Rev. Mr. Day, pastor of the church in the Lower Village. In an obituary notice of Mr. Parker, Rev. Mr. Day says of his afternoon discourse on that day: "He preached his last sermon from the words of the prophet: 'The soul that sinneth it shall die.' There seemed to be an universal conviction on the part of all who heard him, that it was one of the most solemn discourses he ever preached. His appeals at the close were heart searching, and seemed to prognosticate his own approaching dissolution." At the close of the second service, he returned home. Later in the afternoon, he went to attend a third service at one of the school-houses in a distant part of the town. He preached with his usual earnestness on such occasions, and at the close of the meeting started to return. When he had gone about one half of the distance, and was a mile and a half from his home, his horse stumbled and fell. He ran back a few rods to Mr. Clark's, the nearest house, to call assistance. Undoubtedly feeling pain from the effort already made, and conscious of the danger to which he was exposed by over-exertion, he told Mr. Clark that he must return slowly, and would then aid him in attending to the horse. On returning to his carriage, and while stooping over his horse, either to prevent him from rising suddenly, or to loosen some of the harness, Mr. Clark heard him groan, and saw him in the act of falling forward. He immediately caught him in his arms, when he expired without a struggle, not breathing more than once afterwards. Thus ended the days of this faithful minister of the gospel. It was a fitting time to die,—in the midst of his labors,—on the Sabbath, after its duties were all performed,—and at the going down of the sun. Appropriately did one of his parishioners remark: "He served his

Master faithfully all day, and went home to rest at night." It would have been gratifying to his friends could they have stood beside him as he breathed out his life, and received from him his last messages and parting blessing. But "what God appoints, is best." They know how he had lived, and they know what would have been the burden of his message to them and to the people of his charge, could he have spoken to them as he was entering another world. His remains, sustained in the arms of his youngest son, were borne home to his stricken family, who, while they mourned the loss of an endeared husband and father, bowed with becoming resignation to him who had afflicted them.

His death occurred at so late an hour that it was not generally known that evening. But when, in the early morning, the long-protracted tolling of the bell announced that some unusual calamity had occurred; and when the word flew from house to house that their pastor had fallen dead in the street, the effect was overwhelming. More than twelve hundred of his flock had gone down to the grave since he had dwelt among them; and now the pastor who had so often been in the midst of death, and seemed almost exempt from its power, had passed through the dark valley. The deepest grief pervaded the whole parish. Every one whom you met was subdued and solemn. Strong men turned aside from their labors, and sat in silence through the day; and some of the children in the schools were inconsolable with grief.

His funeral was attended on the following Wednesday, by a very large assembly. His own parishioners, people from all parts of the town, and from adjacent towns, and an unusually large number of clergymen, came together to pay their last tribute of respect to their deceased pastor and friend. It was a pleasant summer day, but all hearts were smitten with grief. After prayer at his late residence, by Rev. Mr. Eels of Newburyport, his remains were conveyed to the church, and in the entrance-hall, an opportunity was given to the assembly, as they successively entered the house, to take a last look of the deceased. It was a long time

before this sad ceremony was concluded, each seeming reluctant to turn away from the countenance upon which they could never look again. The house was draped with mourning, and was filled in all parts. The services, which were of a very solemn and appropriate character, were performed by the Rev. Mr. Day, of Derry, Rev. Mr. Thayer, of Windham, Rev. Mr. Willey, of Goffstown, and Rev. Mr. Brainerd of Londonderry. The deepest feeling was manifested by the audience, and many were bathed in tears. After these exercises, the whole congregation followed the remains to the grave, where they now rest with those of all the pastors who had preceded him in that church. At the grave, was sung the burial hymn of Watts: "Unveil thy bosom, faithful tomb," and then the mourning crowd withdrew to meet that respected and revered pastor no more till the morning of the resurrection. In the afternoon of the Sabbath following, a highly appropriate sermon was preached by Rev. Dr. Whiton, of Antrim, the early and intimate friend of Mr. Parker, from Psalm 116: 15, "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints." On this occasion, also, as well as at his funeral, the assembly was very large; every part of the house, including the aisles and entries, was filled. The services of the Rev. Mr. Day's society, a large part of whom had belonged to Mr. Parker's parish, were suspended, and pastor and people came to mingle their sympathies and to worship with that flock which was now left as sheep without a shepherd.

The following is an extract from Dr. Whiton's sermon on that occasion: "An intimacy of more than forty years with your departed pastor, drawn the closer by parity of age, by an almost contemporaneous entrance into the ministry, and by frequent association in presbyterial and ecclesiastical duties, has not only left on my mind a deep impression of his piety and worth, but enables me to speak with a degree of confidence on the leading traits of his character.

"That he, or any other mere man, was faultless, it were foolish and even wicked to pretend. He saw and felt in himself the evil

and demerit of sin, and fled for refuge to the blood of Christ. He ever appeared to walk, in a happy degree humbly with God, looking for salvation as the free, unmerited gift of mercy to the ill-deserving, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Next to his piety comes his prudence ; not the timid prudence that shrinks from duty, but the prudence that scrupulously shuns just occasions of offence. In sound practical wisdom he excelled most others ; not making little things great, nor great things little, but estimating them according to their relative importance. This trait made him a safe, reliable counsellor, in cases the most perplexed. Evenness and stability of feeling, consistency of conduct with principle, strongly marked his character. In point of industry and diligence, he was certainly preëminent, there being few men who had accomplished an equal amount of ministerial labor. This unremitting diligence made him familiar with his people, including the children of his parish, and was one of the means by which he preserved them in harmony and peace. Of his method and correctness, the records of the Londonderry presbytery, kept by his hand for about thirty years, will remain a lasting memorial. Integrity marked all his transactions ; he was a man to be trusted. That crowning excellence, love of the religion of God, made him willing to spend and be spent in the service of Christ, in a continuous course of effort for the salvation of souls. His investigations of Christian doctrines and duties were patient ; the subjects which passed through his hands were well weighed and lucidly presented to others.

“He is gone ! ‘God took him’ at the time and in the manner unerring wisdom saw best. Looking at our loss, we may well exclaim, ‘Alas, my brother !’ ‘My father, my father, the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof !’ Of the circumstances of his death, so sudden, surprising, affecting, it were needless to speak to those who know the details better than myself. The summons found our brother where a Christian would wish to be found, at the post of duty, intent on his Master’s work. To him, the close

of his last earthly Sabbath was, we doubt not, the beginning of a Sabbath, heavenly and eternal. Probably not a minister could have fallen in New Hampshire, whose death would have called forth a larger tribute of regrets and tears!

" You, the people of his charge, are witnesses how holily and justly, and unblamably he walked among you; *yourselves* are his letter of commendation, known and read of all men. Full well you know, that not often occurs a ministry attended with equal harmony and confidence, and honored with an equal number of seals of the divine approbation. Both yourselves and your children will cherish his name with long and affectionate remembrance."

The following notices of Mr. Parker, which appeared in the weekly journals, though involving some repetition, are here inserted, as evidences of the estimate which others formed of his character and ministry; they will also show that the filial interest of the writer has not led him to draw this brief sketch with too partial a hand.

" Mr. Parker," says the Rev. Mr. Day, " is one of the brightest examples of ministerial fidelity which can be found in our State or New England. As a preacher, he was clear, close, and doctrinal. He well understood the wants and sympathies of the common mind, and never failed to furnish instruction. As a pastor he excelled. He was never weary in going from house to house, to inquire for the temporal and spiritual welfare of his people. He was peculiarly happy at the bedside of the sick, and with the mourner. He was deeply interested in the young, and gave to them no small part of his energies. He well knew what stations they were to occupy in society, and how very soon they would be the leading members of his parish. He kept his eye on the Sabbath and common schools, and was sure to let every child know that he was interested in him. He has gone down to his grave like a shock of corn fully ripe, deeply lamented by his people, and the churches at large. He died as perhaps he might have wished to die, had he designated his own time and circumstances. He was in the work,

with the harness on. His life might be written in the emphatic words of the apostle, and would furnish a most appropriate epitaph for his tombstone : ‘ Not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.’ ”

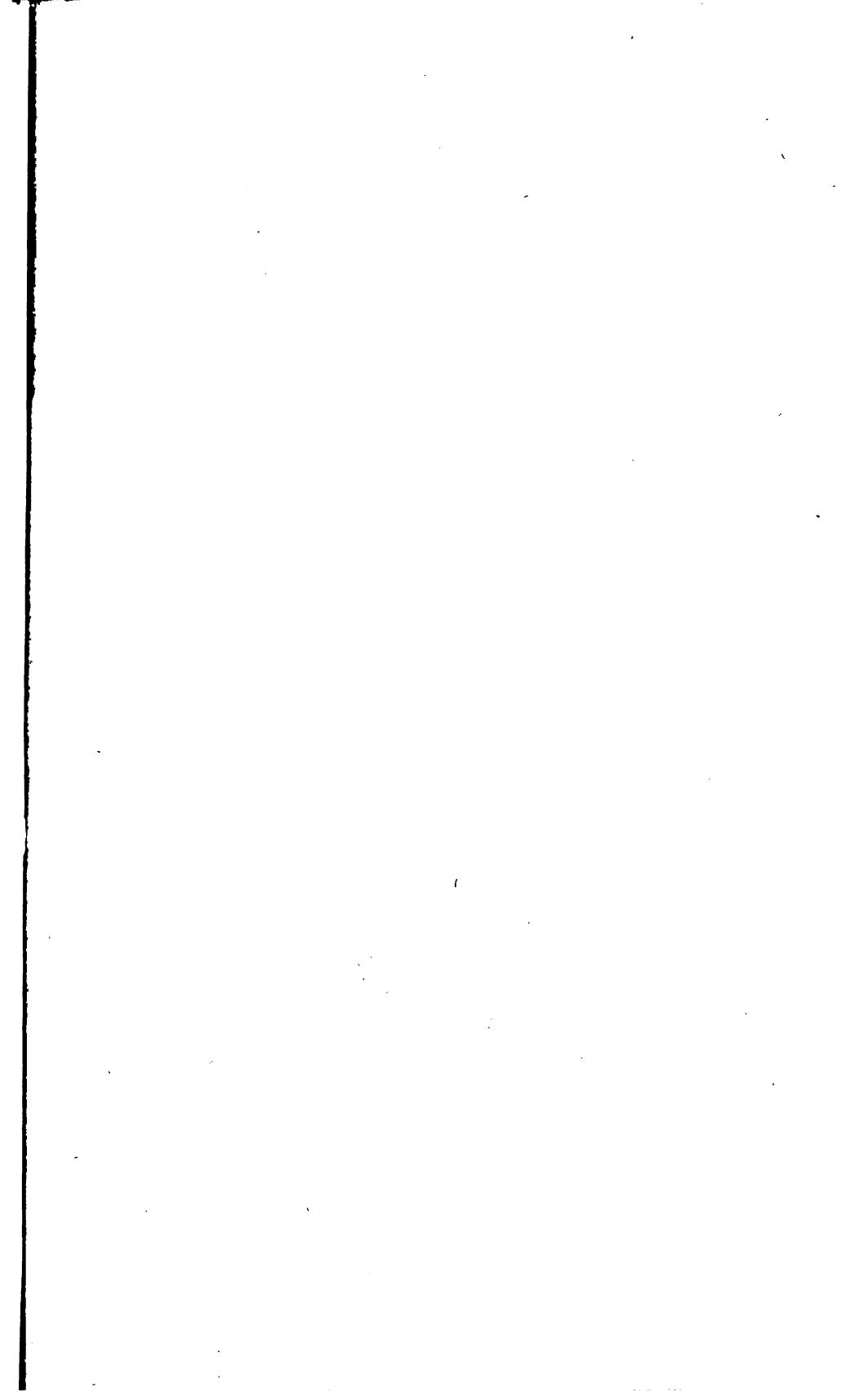
“ Mr. Parker,” observes a correspondent of the Congregationalist, “ was remarkable for his knowledge of human nature, and for his true Christian courtesy,— an example of purity and consistency in his life ; ever laborious and faithful as a preacher and a pastor, he retained not only his post of duty, but what was more, the confidence and affection of his people. He died in the midst of his labors, and though less known than the great Scotch divine, will, like him, wherever known, be remembered and loved.”

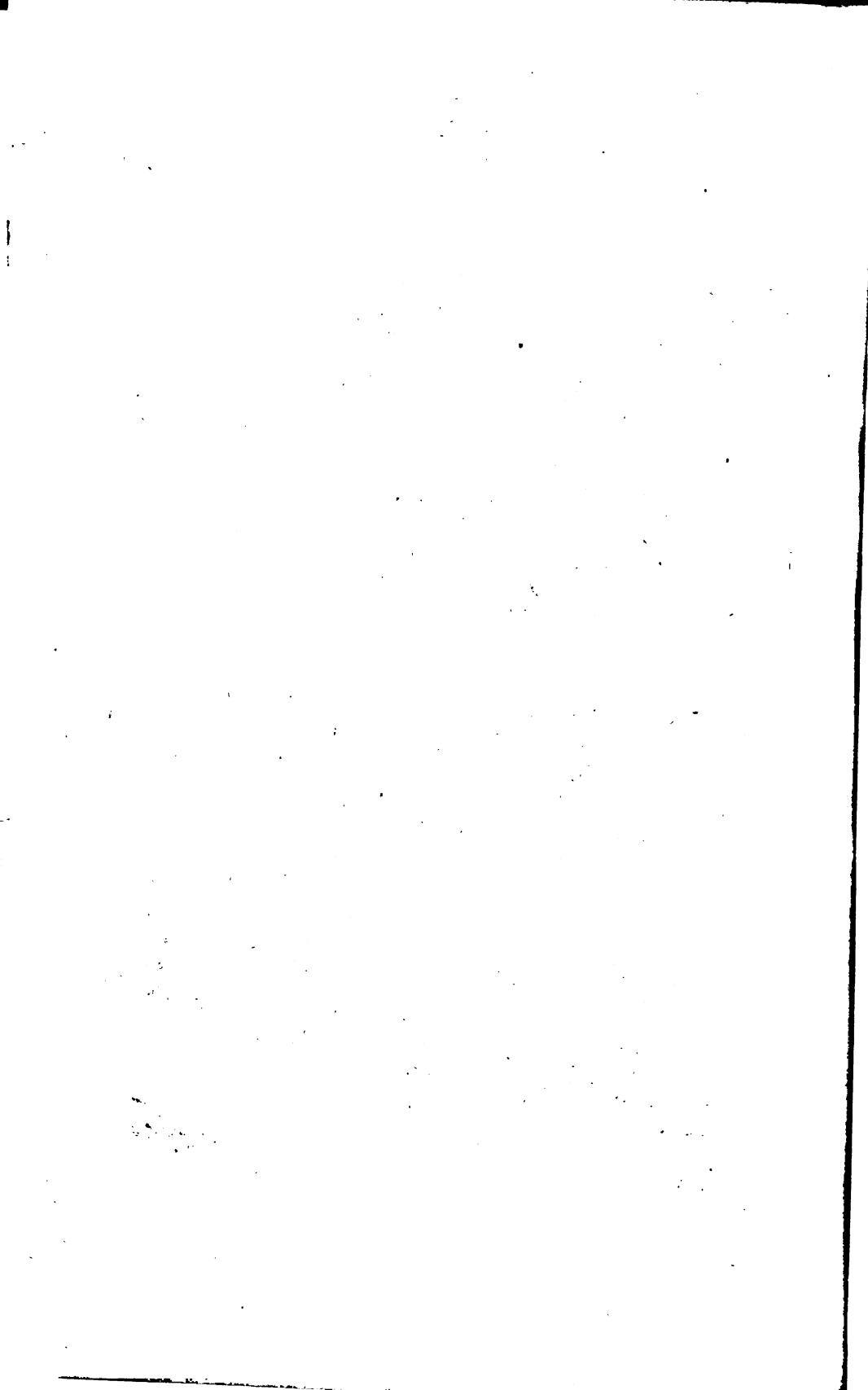
The following is from the Congregational Journal of January, 1851 : “ Soon after Mr. Parker graduated, he became the pastor of the Presbyterian church in Derry, then a part of Londonderry, which was in a condition far from promising and inviting ; but under his wise counsels, his unremitting labors, his self-possessed spirit, and admitted moral worth, attained to be one of the best-ordered, the most harmonious and flourishing in the State. With very respectable powers of mind, and sermons always full of the marrow of the gospel, instructive and cheering, if not the most deeply studied or eloquently delivered, still, the grand secret of his success was in his *system* and *wisdom*. He lived and acted by a plan, from which he never deviated, and carried it out to the last hour of his life. Not that he was obstinate, self-opinionated, or incapable of seeing and appreciating improvements ; but he always made his changes by system and rule. He was always active, but never in a hurry ; never tired, but always working. He was always at home, and yet in every nook of his parish ; he seemed to make no effort to do it, yet, strictly and truly speaking, he could call every child in his large parish by name. Not that he did this from a certain passion or affectation ; all was subservient to the great end of the pastoral office, that he might ‘ save himself, and those that heard him.’ Then, too, he was always judicious

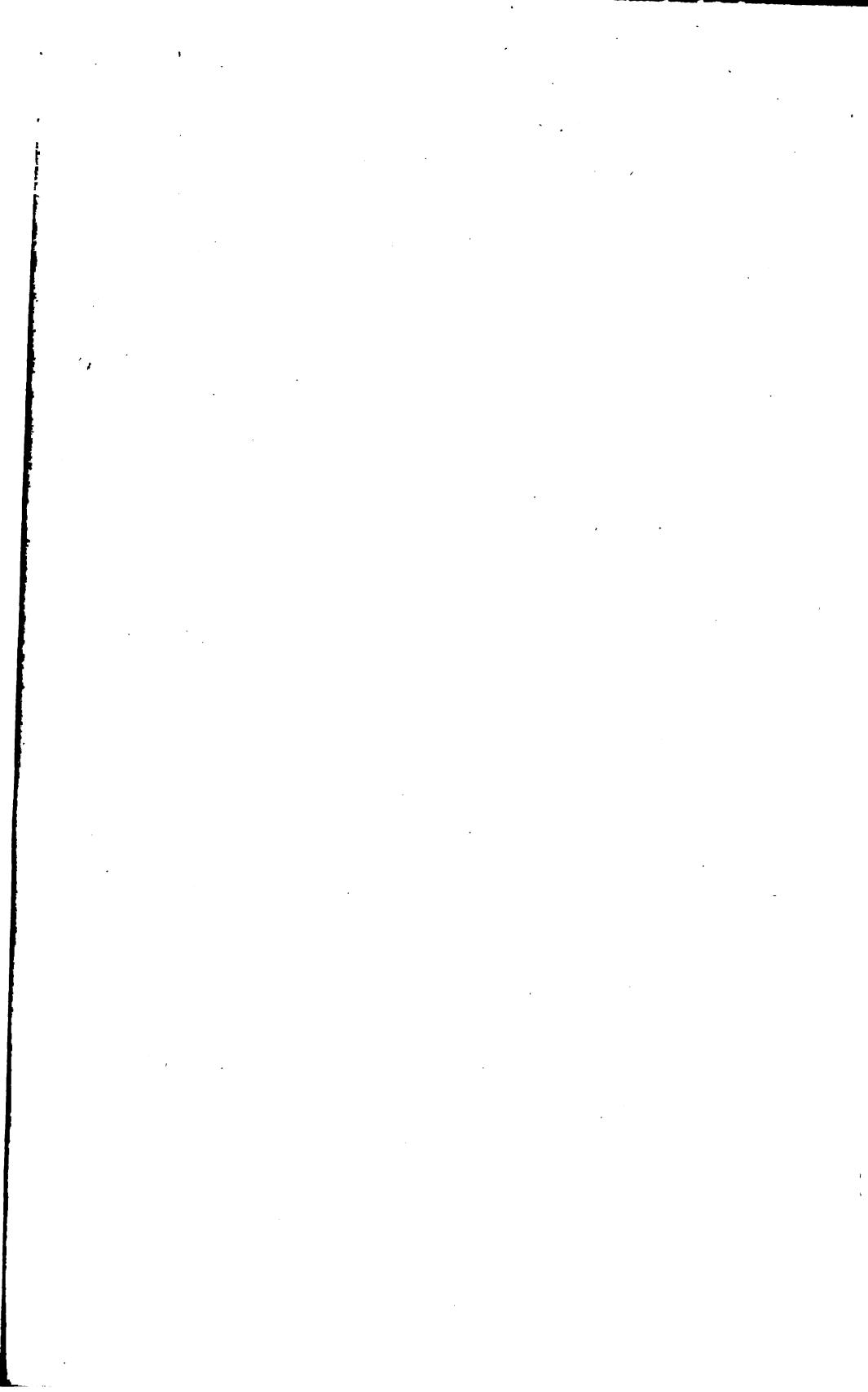
and wise. He never, so far as we know, made a false step or took an untenable position. Naturally passionate, he was always cool and self-possessed ; encountering, once or twice, organized and formidable opposition on account of the doctrines he preached, he vanquished it by forbearance and kindness, without the sacrifice of principle, and converted his bitterest enemies into his firmest friends. Rarely has any man done so few injudicious and unwise things ; as rarely has any man uttered so few injudicious, idle, or injurious words. He was a model pastor, and his name will long be held in affectionate and respectful remembrance."

With much truth has it been said, by one of our most distinguished statesmen,* that "the noblest contribution which any man can make for the benefit of posterity, is that of a good character. The richest bequest which any man can leave to the youth of his native land, is that of a shining, spotless example." Such a legacy, emphatically, has the subject of this memoir left to his family and friends, to the people of his late charge, to the youth among whom he labored, to his brethren in the ministry, and to all who knew him.

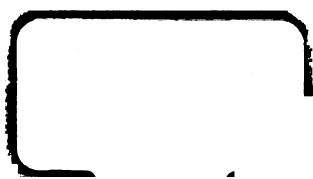
* Hon. Robert C. Winthrop.











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